

Farm & Market Report

Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture

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Y2K Aquaculture Grants

A number of funding opportunities for aquaculture projects will be available during Y2K.

With funding available from the Seaport Revitalization Bond Initiative and MDFA, grant programs have been developed by the Massachusetts Aquaculture Centers Network and this department. The following is a summary of each program and who to contact for more information.

- The Southeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center (SEMAC) fund projects that encourage aquaculture development and diversification, promote environmentally responsible aquaculture projects, develop aquaculture best management practices, develop alternative aquaculture technologies and species, encourage private/public collaboration and the innovative marketing approaches for aquaculture products. The deadline for application to this program is 12:00 noon February 4, 2000. For program information contact Bill Burt at Barnstable County Cooperative Extension 508-375-6702, wburt@umext.umass.edu or Darlene Johnson 508-375-0130 x106.
- The Northeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center (NEMAC) has established a mini grant program to help jump-start aquaculture on the North Shore through the involvement of local fishers and educators. This mini-grant program is modeled after the successful program implemented by SEMAC. Through a competitive grants program, small projects (\$1,000-\$3,000) can be generated and supported. For program information, contact Mark Fregeau at (978) 542-6705 or mfregeau@salem.mass.edu.
- In an effort to explore the potential for expansion bait fish culture in Massachusetts, the Western Massachusetts Center for Sustainable Aquaculture (WMCSA) has developed a small grant program that will enable between 4 and 10 agricultural operations to establish bait fish culture projects. For program information, contact Ken Bergstrom at 413-599-5776 or kbergstrom@hampshire.edu.
- The Massachusetts Aquaculture Grants Program was developed and first offered in 1998 to provide assistance to aquaculture projects aimed at addressing the needs of the growing Massachusetts industry. The Y2K Mass. Aquaculture Grants Program will fund projects that address the needs that were identified through a survey of the 350+ members of the Massachusetts industry. For program information, contact Scott J. Soares at 617-626-1703 or scott.j.soares@state.ma.us. ■

A Clean Bill of Health for Massachusetts Agriculture

A report issued this month by the University of Massachusetts' Donahue Institute says that the agriculture industry in Massachusetts appears to be quite healthy. The report was published in this month's issue of *Massachusetts Benchmarks*, a Donahue Institute publication.

"The Changing Landscape of Massachusetts Agriculture,"

written by UMass/Amherst graduate student David Holm and faculty members Daniel Lass and Richard Rogers, is an analysis of U.S. Census of Agriculture data. The report identifies trends in local agriculture and compares Massachusetts with the rest of the United States.

According to the report, farm sales are up and the balance sheets of the state's farmers are sound overall. The authors found that there have been significant changes in the agricultural product mix, reinforced by considerable geographic diversity within the state. Farmers have responded to changes in prices and costs by increasing crop production and decreasing livestock production.

In contrast to trends in the Midwest, where farmland has been consolidated into fewer, larger farms, the trend in Massachusetts has been an increasing number of smaller farms.

"The authors have provided a road map of the Commonwealth's agricultural sector which we can use to guide our Department's programs," commented Commissioner Jay Healy.

"This report will be extremely useful for years to come in educating policymakers and the general public about

just how important agriculture is in Massachusetts," Healy added.

The report acknowledges the difficulties faced by the dairy and cranberry industries and recognizes other challenges for farmers such as development pressure, investment costs and labor costs, as well as the aging of the farm population and the lack of entry-level farmers.

A more detailed report will be published later this year as will an analysis of the processing and distribution sectors, a study of the state's self-sufficiency in food production and a case study.

Massachusetts Benchmarks is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.massbenchmarks.org>. ■

2000 FSMIP Grant Proposals Are Now Being Accepted

Proposals are now being accepted for 2000 grants to be awarded through the USDA Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP). The deadline is February 1st for the first round and May 1st for the second round.

FSMIP Grants are awarded to agricultural organizations for market development, market research, and marketing education projects. This Federal Grant program is administered through state departments of agriculture. For more information, contact Mary Jordan at 617-626-1750.



This publication is available in alternate formats upon request and on the World Wide Web at www.massgrown.org.



Commissioner's Column

Looking Into the Next Millennium

By Jonathan L. Healy

As we have just entered the year 2000, it seems an appropriate time to reflect upon the past and look at the future. When I was a kid we took our home-grown eggs to Avery's General Store for retail sale. We are long out of the egg business but back then we received about 70 cents of the dollar local customers spent on the eggs. In 1999, according to USDA statistics, farmers receive, on average, only 21 cents of the customer dollar when they sell their products wholesale.

In response to these market realities, many local farms and agricultural businesses have often supplemented, or even replaced, single commodity wholesale sales through diversified, niche, value-added direct retail sales operations.

Many non-agricultural folks are somewhat astounded to learn that Massachusetts ranks seventh in the country for total retail sales and second in the country for retail sales per individual farm. Our land costs are higher but, on average, we receive nearly 50 percent more income per acre of agricultural land used than those in our competing New England states.

On my farm I greatly enjoy the challenge of adding value to the trees we've grown for over 100 years and then trying to cheerfully market the products to local customers. It's tricky but very nice to be able to control one's price and not be subject to middlemen who take their margin regardless of farmer income.

I don't have any crystal ball for the next millennium but I continue to think that there are tremendous opportunities for all our 6,000 farms here in Massachusetts. We might have to do things a little differently than our grandfathers did but there are over six million customers in our Commonwealth who, given the choice, prefer to do business with local farmers.

I'd also like to add a note of thanks to everyone in the ag community: farmers, Farm Bureau, MNLA, Mass. Flower Grower's Assoc., CCCGA, NEVBGA, MSFA, Ag. in the Classroom, CISA, SEMAP and all of you as well as the great folks here at DFA.

By working together over the past few years, we have established new programs that have helped preserve valuable farmland. Thanks as well to Secretary Durand, the Cellucci/Swift administration, and the many legislators who have formed partnerships to provide more financial opportunities and tools for our farming community. Happy New Year!

Farm-City Connections

Ag in the Classroom Update

The first teacher workshop of the new year will be Saturday, March 18 at Boyden Brothers Farm and Sugar House in Conway, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. This is one in a series of workshops sponsored by Mass. Ag. in the Classroom (MAC).

The morning program will highlight trees and forestry in Massachusetts. Participants will also tap a maple tree, collect sap, see it boiled in the sugar house and learn maple sugar activities to carry out in the classroom. Teachers will also learn about preparing agricultural field trips and visiting local farms.

Five professional development points will be earned for attending the workshop and a farm style lunch is included in the \$25 fee. Workshop attendants will also learn how to apply to the popular Ag in the Classroom mini-grant program. For more info, call Debi Hogan at 508-336-4426 or e-mail dchogan@sprynet.com.

1999 Field Trip Feedback

Each year the Department answers requests from schools for farmers and our staff to visit classrooms in various towns and cities. We also coordinate field trips by school groups to local farms. Here are a few of the letters from students:

- "Our second grade field trip was a visit to the Spence Farm in Woburn, Massachusetts. The first thing we did was pick strawberries. Then we went into a fantastic greenhouse to plant some flowers. Next we went to a big, long hot house. It was hot inside. Next to the hothouse there is a store. Then we went into the garden. There were beans and tomatoes. We had a very good time.
- "If a tomato is green it is not ripe. It has to be a big, red, juicy tomato to be ripe. We learned about growing flowers and fruit... We had fun and a good time. It was a wonderful trip!"
- Ward's Berry Farm, Sharon: "Thanks for inviting me to a farm. I can't wait to see it." "I love the farm. The strawberries are delicious. The hay ride is fun!"
- Great Brook Farm, Carlisle: "Thank you for setting up the field trip for us and we had a lot of fun! I learned a lot about cows."
- "I liked the goats and cows at the farm. And I liked the cranberry bog."

Getting children and farmers together is a good thing! If you would like to have a school trip to your farm this coming spring and/or you would like to visit a classroom in your area this winter, call Janet Christensen at 617-626-1735, or e-mail jchristensen@state.ma.us. And thanks! ■

USDA To Sponsor Successful Farming Workshop

The USDA Risk Management Agency will conduct a workshop on February 2nd and 3rd at the Sheraton Nashua Hotel. The workshop, "New England - Successful Farming in the New Millennium," will focus on concepts of marketing and farm labor risks.

Farmers will receive expert training in areas such as marketing awareness, avoiding common marketing mistakes, market protection through crop insurance, dealing with family and labor relations, preparing for farm transfer, and hiring local/foreign labor.

Featured speakers include Monte Hemenover, an independent consultant from Avenues for Change; Gregory Encina Bilikopf, a well-known labor management specialist from the University of California. Agricultural companies will participate on panels discussing successful large and small farm marketing issues.

The cost of the two-day workshop is \$20 per person (advance registration). For more information on the conference and hotel accommodations, contact Mary Cleveland at the USDA Risk Management Agency at 302-831-2512 or Mary Jordan at DFA at 617-626-1750. ■

FarmNet of the Pioneer Valley

A free information, referral and consultation service for the farm community of Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties.

800-327-6002
413-549-1483 (Hampshire Co.)

Farm & Market Report Monthly

Robert Durand
Secretary of Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Department of
Food and Agriculture
617-626-1700

Jonathan L. Healy
Commissioner of Food and Agriculture

Richard Hubbard
Assistant Commissioner

Mary Jordan, *Director, Agricultural Development*
Susan Allen, *Chief, Bureau of Markets*
Steven Quinn, *Chief, Bureau of Fairs*
James Hines, *Director, Dairy Services*
David Sheldon, *Director, Regulatory Services*
Dr. Lorraine O'Connor, *Bureau of Animal Health*
Brad Mitchell, *Chief, Pesticide Bureau*
George Porter, *Chief, Bureau of Farm Products*
Janet Christensen, *Director, Education and Press*

Diane Baedeker Petit
Editor, *Farm & Market Report*

Internet: aginfo@state.ma.us
<http://www.massgrown.org>

Get to Know the Bureau of Markets

Following is a profile Department's Bureau of Markets staff with a brief description of each staff member's responsibilities. Feel free to contact these folks if you need marketing assistance.

☺ **Anneli Johnson**

617-626-1755
anneli.johnson@state.ma.us
 Agri-tourism Coordinator. Administers the Agricultural Directional Signage Program. Liaison to Mass. Lamb/Wool Board, Mass. Turkey Growers Assoc., Pioneer Valley Sheep Breeders' Assoc., Mass. Egg Producers Assoc., community supported agriculture (CSAs) and NOFA/MA (organics).

☺ **Rick LeBlanc**

617-626-1759
richard.leblanc@state.ma.us
 Direct Marketing Specialist. Consumer outreach programs. Contact for point-of-purchase materials and logo merchandise. Liaison to Mass. Assoc. of Roadside Stands, Mass. Beekeepers Assoc., Mass. Fruit Growers' Assoc., N.E. McIntosh Assoc., CISA and the Cider Guild.

☺ **Bonita Oehlke**

617-626-1753
bonita.oehlke@state.ma.us
 Export development and foreign trade specialist. Commercial kitchen coordinator. Liaison to the food processing sector, Mass. Specialty Food Assoc., Mass. Maple Producers Assoc., N.E. Ratite Assoc. and Mass. Wine Producers Assoc.

☺ **Larry Street**

617-626-1756
larry.street@state.ma.us
 Wholesale Marketing Specialist. Works with supermarkets, co-operatives and distributors. IPM and eco-label coordinator. Contact for point-of-purchase signage. Liaison to N.E. Produce Council and Mass. Christmas Tree Growers Assoc.

☺ **David Webber**

617-626-1754
david.webber@state.ma.us
 Farmers' Market & Farmers' Market Coupon Program Coordinator. Foodservice specialist. Liaison to the Federation of Mass. Farmers' Markets, N.E. Vegetable & Berry Growers Assoc., Chefs' Collaborative 2000, 5 A Day Coalition and the Mass. Nutrition Board.

☺ **Susan Allen**

617-626-1751
susan.allen@state.ma.us
 Bureau Chief of Markets. Oversees all promotional efforts including consumer awareness campaign. Executes marketing grant program. Liaison to Mass. Flowers Growers Assoc. and Mass. Agriculture Promotional Board.

☺ **Mary Jordan**

617-626-1750
mary.moffitt@state.ma.us
 Director of Agricultural Development. Assists with the implementation of the Agricultural Marketing Strategy and 'Buy Local' campaign. Oversees the Bureau of Markets, Bureau of Fairs and the Bureau of Land Use. Coordinate the Federal-State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP). ■

Plan Ahead for Wholesale Marketing

Supermarket and wholesale distributors are planning now for the new growing season. It's time for Massachusetts growers to finalize a business plan and schedule appointments with produce buyers. Contact supermarkets and distributors now to check their appointment schedule for the year 2000. For more information contact Larry Street at 617-626-1756 or e-mail lstreet@state.ma.us. ■

Community Garden Project Needs Land

C.A.R.E (Caring about our Residential Elderly), a non-profit community garden organization in Gloucester, is seeking additional garden plots or vacant land to lease to meet the increasing demand for locally grown fresh vegetables. C.A.R.E. was founded this past year to grow vegetables for the area's needy elderly.

They are also in need of garden equipment, such as rakes and cultivators, as well as aged manure. For details, contact Lorrina S. Brown, C.A.R.E., c/o Action Inc. 24 Elm St., Gloucester, MA 01930, 978-828-3160. ■

Winter Flower Growers Meeting Set

A Winter Flower Growers' Meeting will be held Wednesday, February 9 at Mahoney's Rocky Ledge, Woburn. The Mass. Flower Growers' Assoc. and UMass Extension Floriculture Program are co-sponsoring the event.

The meeting will feature open houses at Mahoney's Garden Centers, Winchester; Lexington Gardens, Lexington; Doran's Greenhouses, Inc. Lexington; and Cupp & Sons, Littleton from 8:00 am to 10:30 am and an educational program from 10:30 am to 3:45 pm.

Registration is \$15 per person plus \$12 per person for lunch. For a program, contact Paul Lopes, 508-295-2212 x24, or Tina Smith, 413-545-5306. ■

Farmers' Market Federation Has New Address, Phone

- FMFM
 Eastern Mass Coop. Extension Center
 240 Beaver Street
 Waltham, MA 02154
 Phone - 781-893-8222
 Fax - 781-893-8777

CLASSIFIEDS

Wanted to buy: old yearbooks of agriculture and other agriculture books or pamphlets. Nancy L. Dole, PO Box 74, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370, 413-625-2210.

No more DET/DOL. If interested in converting H-2 to permanent workers, call Office of Mario Lanza at 617-723-1899 or John Dvorak, 617-723-4422.

For sale: Chev. C20 pickup truck 1981, 3/4 ton, excellent tires and body, needs some work, runs. \$250 firm. 413-549-5684.

Intern Position Available: organically managed CSA farm. Participate in all aspects of the farm's operation and in the CRAFT Intern Educational Program. April to Nov. 5 1/2 day weeks, room, stipend, farm vegetables. Contact Eileen, Ol' Turtle Farm CSA, 385 East St., Easthampton, MA 01027, 413-527-9122, olturtle@javanet.com.

For sale: cold storage room, approx. 6'x12'x6'. Complete with compressor (208/230 volt-single phase). Disassembled, ready to load onto your truck! \$1500. 978-355-2015, fax 978-355-0162.

Wanted to buy: antiques - old farm related items, contents of house & barns, wagon wheels, old saddles, furniture. R. Lewis, 978-448-2635.

Land's Sake, a non-profit organization, seeks a Farm Manager and Grower's Assistant for their organic farm. Mixed vegetables, flowers, berries, and PYO. Send resume and letter to: Land's Sake, P.O. Box 306, Weston, MA, 02493, 781/893-1162.

Farmer/future farmer: help us meet expanding retail production demands. 40-50 acres certified organic vegetables/small fruits. 10 acres transitional apples. Organic growers since 1973. Hutchins Farm, Concord, MA. 978-369-5041, e-mail hutchfarm@earthlink.net

12 AC organic MiniFARM. 1800 sf 3Bed ranch. New septic/Master Bath. Perennials, Farmstand, Sheepbarn, Woods, Streams. Immediate sale. \$185,000. New Salem 978-544-2203.

Do you have land that you do NOT want developed? 30-100 remote acres sought for herb farm/retreat center in Western Mass. Will work with you & land trust to get tax deductible Conservation Restriction on your property that can help all of us. Call Carol, 978-544-2203.

Business solutions for the food and agriculture industry. Business planning and business funding. 20 years experience. Ask for our brochure. Woody Pratt, Sherwood Consultants Brookline, MA, 617-232-8818, fax: 617-277-0126, e-mail: spratt@quik.com

Old Mountain Farm; Nigerian Dwarf Dairy Goats. Y2K kids arriving Jan.-March. Registered, Show Quality, Disease free, Milking herd, Bottled kids. York, ME. (207)361-2126 olmfarm@gwi.net

DEADLINE for the next issue of the *Farm & Market Report* will be February 1.

How to Place a Classified Ad

Classified ads are accepted free-of-charge on a first-come basis only. Listings are limited to 25 words. Be sure to include a phone number. No display ads will be accepted. Only one listing per farm or business per issue unless space permits. Ads may run in consecutive issues, space permitting, providing we are notified before the deadline for each issue.

Listings must be of interest to Massachusetts farmers. The Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication.

Send typewritten or neatly printed ad copy to: Farm & Market Report, Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, 100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02202, fax: 617-626-1850, e-mail: dbaedeker@state.ma.us or call Diane Baedeker Pettit at 617-626-1752.

Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference Scheduled for March

The Massachusetts Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show will be held on Friday, March 10, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Holiday Inn at Boxborough Woods in Boxborough, Mass.

The Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets and the Massachusetts Association of Roadside Stands are co-sponsoring the conference in cooperation with the Department of Food and Agriculture and the University of Massachusetts Extension Service.

The conference offers a full day of seminars, a trade show and a key note presentation on "Unique Farm Marketing Techniques from Around the Globe."

Seminar topics will include: hosting profitable birthday parties and other children's events; insuring entertainment agriculture and other direct marketing venues; selling what your customer want; and why you should get your farm on the World Wide Web. Staff from DFA and Cooperative Extension will discuss projects relating to farm direct marketing.

The all-day trade show includes over 50 vendors displaying products that enhance roadside stand and farmers' markets displays.

For information on pre-registration or trade show space, call Chris Wychorski or Charlie Touchette at 413-529-0386. ■

Calendar

- ◆ February 2 & 3 **"Successful Farming in the New Millenium,"** a USDA Risk Management Workshop at the Sheraton Hotel, Nashua, NH. Contact Mary Cleveland, USDA, 302-831-2512 or Mary Jordan, MDFA, 617-626-1750.
- ◆ February 3 **Nutrient Management Workshop**, Hadley. Sponsored by New England Small Farm Institute. Call Kathy Ruhf, 413-323-4531.
- ◆ February 5 **NOFA Winter Organic Conference** at Quabbin Regional High School. Contact Elaine Peterson, 978-928-4707.
- ◆ February 9 **Nutrient Management Workshop**, Pittsfield. Sponsored by New England Small Farm Institute. Call Kathy Ruhf, 413-323-4531.
- ◆ February 9 **Winter Flower Growers Meeting**, 8:00 am to 3:45 pm at Mohoney's Rocky Ledge, Woburn. Sponsored by the Mass. Flower Growers Association. Contact Paul Lopes, 508-295-2212 x24 or Tina Smith, 413-545-5306.
- ◆ March 7-8 **New England Turkey Growers Conference**, Sturbridge, MA. Contact Pat Rischer, 978-687-7175.
- ◆ March 10 **Massachusetts Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference** at the Holiday Inn, Boxborough. See item this page. Contact Chris Wychorski or Charlie Touchette at 413-529-0386.
- ◆ March 22-23 **New England Poultry Health Conference**, Portsmouth, NH. Contact Dr. Mike Opitz, 207-581-2771 or Bill Bell, 207-622-3940.
- ◆ March 28 **Ag Day at the State House**. Contact Susan Allen, 617-626-1751, Susan.Allen@state.ma.us.

What's Happening on Your Farm This Summer?

The Department of Food and Agriculture plans to publish a listing of public events on farms this summer. If you have a summer farm event that you would like to have included in our calendar, please return this form to our office by May 15th.

Name of Event: _____

Name of the Farm: _____

Description: _____

Dates and time(s): _____

Price/Admission: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone number: _____

Send form to: Farm Events Calendar, Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, 100 Cambridge St. Boston, MA 02202. Or e-mail the info to: Anneli.Johnson@state.ma.us.

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